



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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CITY LEADERS GATHER TO COMMEMORATE THE LIFE OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AT 34TH ANNUAL INTERFAITH BREAKFAST

CHICAGO - Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today gathered with civic, business and religious leaders to celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the City of Chicago's 34th Annual Interfaith Breakfast. This year's ceremony featured keynote speaker Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president emerita of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), and Dr. Mildred C. Harris, founder and CEO of God First Church Ministries and the 2020 Champion of Freedom Award recipient.

Each year, the City of Chicago hosts the ceremony to celebrate the achievements of Dr. King, his impact on American society and the work that remains. During the program religious leaders of different faiths led prayers of Unity.

"Dr. King's question, 'Where Do We Go From Here?' came amidst the backdrop of progress but also bitter frustrations and disappointments, both in and outside the Civil Rights Movement itself, including here in the city of Chicago," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Today, Dr. King's work for justice and equality continues in Chicago. His example reminds us that we have a responsibility to rebuild communities that have been left out and left behind for generations, and the power to expand equity and inclusion on the South and West Sides."

The Mayor presented keynote speaker Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president emerita of CDF, with a Lifetime Achievement Award for her work as an advocate for disadvantaged Americans, particularly children and young people. Under her leadership for the past 45 years, CDF has become one of the nation's strongest voices for children and families. The Children's Defense Fund's Leave No Child Behind[®] works to ensure every child has a healthy start, a head start, a fair start, a safe start and a moral start in life and a successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

"Dr. King's dream is in our hands and we must carry on until we achieve it. Let us honor him—not just with statues, memorials or holidays—but sustained, effective action to end the poisons of poverty, racism, and violence," said Mrs. Edelman"



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To commemorate Dr. King’s legacy of work toward peace, universal human rights and widespread economic empowerment, Dr. Mildred C. Harris, founder and CEO of God First Church and Ministries, received the City of Chicago’s Champion of Freedom Award. Dr. Harris has spent her life bringing thousands of people together from all walks of life and investing in Chicago through her ministry. God First Church and Ministries is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving diverse communities through social programs and services. Additionally, Dr. Harris previously served on the Chicago Housing Authority’s Board of Commissioners.

“I wish to thank the Honorable Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the City of Chicago for the Champion of Freedom Award,” said Dr. Harris. “I am often called a ‘Mother of Zion’ for the City of Chicago. To be acknowledged at the City’s Interfaith Breakfast—which commemorates the lasting legacy of Dr. King—is truly an honor. As a lifelong resident of this City, I wholeheartedly feel that we need to serve others with love and respect. Let us not forget to pray every day for our Mayor and leaders in authority so that we can lead a quiet and peaceable life.”

During the event, moving images of Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement captured by renowned photographer Bernard Kleina were on display. For more than 50 years, Mr. Keina used his camera to uncover and expose racism and hate, as well as highlight those fighting to make a difference.

NBC5 Chicago’s Michelle Relerford served as the Emcee, and there were performances by Adrian Dunn and The Adrian Dunn Singers as well as the Storycatchers Theatre Youth Ensemble.

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